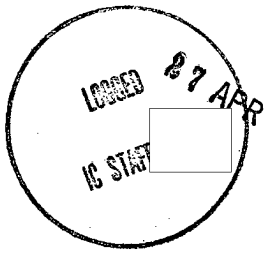
25X1

Copy

CMTE 13-SR

25X1



ICS 1160-88
8 April 1988

25X1

MEMORANDUM FOR: William M. Baker
Director, Public Affairs

FROM: [redacted] 25X1
Chief, Unauthorized Disclosure Analysis Center

SUBJECT: Remarks for Addressing Covert Action Conference [redacted] 25X1

Bill

1. Attached are some ideas which might assist in pulling together your presentation before the Covert Action Conference. [redacted] 25X1

2. The first is a semi-historical piece addressing the parallel themes of covert action and the media. All or part of it might be a lead-in to your discussion of the work of PA. The second [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] might integrate the leak theme into 25X1
your presentation after you have discussed the work of PA, etc. The third item, a one-page unclassified item is provided as a possible anecdote or Q&A response considering the assessment by President Polk 140 years ago. [redacted] 25X1

3. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SECRET [redacted] 25X1

It should come as no surprise to this audience that what we now call covert action or special activities has been a national endevour since the founding of our Republic. Less known, perhaps, is the role of the media, both as friend and adversary in the process.

One of the first agents recruited abroad by our first intelligence directorate, the Committee of Secret Correspondence of the Continental Congress was a journalist, Charles W. F. Dumas, stationed at The Hague. There, Dumas used his natural cover to collect intelligence, but more importantly to influence friends and potential friends of America.

In Paris, Benjamin Franklin used his presses to print spurious newspapers for circulation in Europe, each issue charging the British with some horrendous crime against humanity. He arranged for stories to be planted in the press for much the same purpose, including a few that surfaced in the Royal heartland of England. From our secret Paris station came a never ending list of proposals for covert action to disrupt the British war effort: One was to send priests to Ireland to stir up trouble, another was to arm the natives in the British Carribean.

The Committee of Secret Correspondence, in a campaign to acquire Canada as a 14th Colony, also went into the secret publishing business, dispatching a printer to Canada to publish materials favorable to the American cause. The mission failed, but the printer remained behind, ultimately establishing the paper we know today as *Montreal Gazette.* If you wish, you might call it America's longest running covert action operation, although I suspect that somewhere along the way we lost control.

Indeed, the American Revolution saw the first unauthorized disclosure, the "leak" of perhaps the greatest secret of the conflict, the covert support of America by France during the period before France formally entered the war as our ally. Tom Paine, the secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, drew upon highly sensitive documents of the Committee of Secret Correspondence for his pseudononymous "Common Sense" columns. The French

were aghast that we would would permit the secret to be published. Congress fired Tom Paine and immediately passed a patently false resolution declaring that the column was wrong, that we had received no secret aid whatsoever from France during the period in question.

In the first year of our Republic, Congress appropriated $40,000 for President Washington's secret service fund, officially the Contingent Fund of Foreign Intercourse. By his third year in office appropriations to the fund reached one million dollars, or 12 percent of the national budget. A goodly portion of it was for covert action, ranging from bribes of foreign officials to secret ransom of Americans held hostage in the Middle East. The story leaked, but President Washington refused to disclose to whom the money had been paid: "Both justice and policy required that the . . . information should remain secret as a knowledge of the sums meant to have been given for peace and ransom might have a disadvantageous influence on future proceedings for the same objects," he said.

President Thomas Jefferson also saw one of his covert action efforts condemned in the nation's press. He had prevailed on the Congress to appropriate two million dollars to begin the operation, payment to Napolean to coerce Spain into yielding the Floridas to the United States. The story of the monstrous bribe intended for Napolean leaked to the press and Jefferson was accused of feeding "the ravenous sharks of foreign corruption." They were right, of course, but Jefferson kept his silence. It was fortunate he did. After the story hit the front pages, Napolean backed out of the deal and it was left to President Madison to launch the successful covert action that dropped western Florida into our lap.

Those earlier years were not without abuses involving use of the press for covert action. The Congress was outraged when it learned that President Tyler and his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, had used secret service funds to buy and plant stories in the religious press of Maine to convince that state's citizens to accept a politically unpopular treaty with Canada. Congress demanded that Tyler's successor, President Polk, release all the accounts of the affair. He refused, declaring that there were matters "the very object of which would be defeated by publicity." He also made a clear distinction between the two uses of the secret service fund. One, of course, is payment to those who collected information. The other, and I quote, is for

"rendering other important services," i.e. covert action. Polk set a fortunate precedent in refusing disclosure. Before long the story hit the headlines that one of his agents was producing a revolution in California.

Another leak ended what was a promising covert action effort by President Pierce to acquire Cuba. The plan was to send a group of bankers to Europe to negotiate with moneylenders there to call in debts owed by the Spanish Crown. Spain, in order to pay the debt, would have to sell Cuba to the United States, something it had consistently refused to do. The bankers met with the moneylenders and the plan was put into operation, only to be blasted out of the water when the story broke in the *New York Herald.*

I cite these cases to demonstrate that little has changed. Then, as now, leaks of important covert action operations resulted in disclosure and failure. Then, as now, cooperative foreign governments and sources were hung out to dry before readers of the daily press, both here and abroad.

But, the press wasn't always unfriendly. Moses Yale Beach, one of the founders of the New York Associated Press, as a secret agent for President Polk traveled to Mexico on a British passport in an effort to ingratiate himself with Mexican leaders in an effort to seek peace. Francis J. Grund, the newsman credited with being the father of the sensational style of journalism, served President Buchanan secretly in Europe. As late as World War II, a press agency operating out of the National Press Building in downtown Washington, willingly served as the front for a unilateral intelligence agency personally controlled by President Roosevelt.

Then as now, there were those in the media who agreed to temper stories to avoid damaging the nation's intelligence efforts.

But, I am certain you will agree with me that one thing has changed. That is the willingness of trusted government employees, on an ever increasing scale, who for a variety of reasons are willing to surrender our nation's intelligence secrets to less scrupulous members of the media. Be it for favor or revenge, ego or politics, opposition to a policy or advocacy of it, they are

draining our national defense in a perilous world.

 25X1

POSSIBLE TALKING POINTS ON LEAKS

Earlier, when I mentioned some of our nation's earlier problems with leaks in regard to covert action, some of you must have thought I was preaching to the choir. In truth, I am, because we have learned from sad experience that some of that choir is singing to the press. Perhaps those few believe they are being clever by manipulating the press. Perhaps some of them feel that they can see action taken on their proposals or kill someone else's proposals by throwing the issue before the public. 25X1

We can condemn intelligence consumers, the Congress, the White House, or whomever for leaking intelligence secrets, jeopardizing the lives of our personnel and endangering foreign liaison relationships. In weak defense, we must recognize that some of them don't realize the full implication of what they are doing. The same cannot be said for our own personnel. We have to face the simple fact that most of those consumers are never told the intricate details of covert action operations that all too frequently show up in the press. It is time that all of us face up to the fact that leaks are a people problem and that some of those people are our own. 25X1

One prominent Washington-based journalist has acknowledged that he has sources within CIA. He has told us that he develops some of these sources by asking analysts in other departments and agencies to identify those at CIA who are working on certain topics. He then telephones the CIA officers at home in the evening and, in many cases, is able to elicit classified information from them. Some, he told us, are concientious enough to tell him that they will have to report the conversation to the Agency. 25X1

25X1

We ask you, and we back it up with an Agency regulation, not to respond to press inquiries, even if they seem innocuous. If the mosaic theory works for us, it works just as well for the investigative reporter. We ask you to report such inquiries because it alerts us to threatening situations we might be able to nip in the bud. We ask you to impress these thoughts on your co-workers and others who must be told of your covert action efforts for official purposes. 25X1

Some journalists tell us that they are very responsible and would not print anything that would damage the national security. In fact, one syndicated columnist made that claim in speaking to an Agency audience in recent years. He assured the group that he, personally, reviews such materials acquired by his staff and decides whether the security classification is valid or not; those he finds unworthy of protection end up in his column. Another reporter told us that he doesn't keep classified documents in his office where prying eyes can see them; he keeps them at home in a dresser drawer. Yet another journalist, solves the problem by carrying all his illegally-acquired classified documents in his briefcase where he can control who sees them. I believe you will agree with me that we have better ways to protect classified intelligence documents. 25X1

SECRET 25X1

There is another thought which might prompt some of you to suspect I am drawing on my earlier career with the FBI. Let's face it, some members of the press work for the other side. 25X1

has told us how he was able to manipulate many members of the press, 25X1

has told us of a Washington-based newsman who for over thirty years has been a fully paid and instructed agent of a Bloc intelligence service. Unauthorized disclosures don't have to be published to reach the KGB. 25X1 25X1

There is another thought I would hope you would stress to those involved with our nation's sensitive intelligence operations. Simply put, under the right circumstances a journalist's assurances of confidentially are tenuous at best. Testimony under grant of immunity or other inducements in any criminal proceeding is the ultimate call to self-preservation. Morison, whose sentence to hard time was just affirmed by the appeals court, knows this; the evidence used to convict him came from the British publisher to whom he submitted it. 25X1

You might ask what we are doing about leaks. I'm pleased to say that Judge Webster has given his full support to the efforts of the Intelligence Community's Unauthorized Disclosure Analysis Center which is combining time-tested analytical techniques and some of the more respectable counterintelligence techniques to detect and thwart damaging disclosures of intelligence. 25X1

I think it safe to say that with this effort, with the full investigative cooperation of the FBI and other measures in place and contemplated, leaking is no longer a risk-free enterprise. 25X1

How do I assess the damage to our operations from disclosures? Let's examine what we found with the recent book an example of how we weed out the chaff to get to the heart of the problem. Of almost 200 potential unauthorized disclosures we have been able to reduce our target to some three dozen first-time disclosures of classified intelligence information and to focus our attention on those areas from which the most damaging disclosures emanated. The overall assessment of the damage caused by the disclosures in the book is continuing, just as the search for those with classified access who caused that damage remains on the front burner. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Even not an intelligence mission, per se, President Polk's assessment, his efforts to protect the secret, and the leak itself provide an interesting anecdote. S

An example of conflicts that can arise from secret presidential diplomatic initiatives involves Nicholas Philip Trist. Trist had joined the Department of State as a clerk about 1827. After time out as secretary to President Jackson, he returned to the Department, rose to Consul at Havana and ultimately was appointed Chief Clerk of the Department of State.

In 1847, he was summoned to the White House. President Polk had decided to dispatch him to Mexico in an attempt to conclude a treaty of peace. It was a sensitive matter; the Mexican government had rejected earlier overtures and another refusal might impair the dignity of the United States and prove prejudicial to the cause of peace. The president also believed that public disclosure of Trist's mission would doom it: "To give publicity to such a movement before it was commenced, and to have the federal papers giving their own version of it, and, as their habit is, to have them by every means in their power thwarting the objects of the Government by discouraging the enemy to accede to the measure, would in all probability defeat it."

"I . . . charged him to keep the matter a profound secret," Polk recorded in his diary. The president insisted that "no clerk or other person in his Department should have any knowledge of it." With reluctance, Polk agreed to Trist's request that a veteran of the Department be let into the secret but did so only on condition that the man be brought in person before the president and "placed under the strictest injuctions of secrecy." Yet despite these precautions, the story leaked. Polk was dismayed when the *New York Herald* and the *Boston Post* disclosed Trist's secret assignment with what the president called "remarkable accuracy and particularity."

Prepared by: [redacted] 8 APR 88

STAT

Distribution: ICS 1160-88
Original - D/PAO, w/atts
2 - C/UDAC, w/atts
3 - EFS, w/atts
4 - ICS Registry, w/atts
5 - UDAC Chrono, w/atts
6 - UDAC Subject, w/atts